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SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST.

It is a fact which cannot be denied, and which need not be concealed, that there are many who have fallen short of the salvation which has been offered to their acceptance. But how is this? It is not owing to any unwillingness in the Saviour to receive them. It is just *because they have rejected him* in the spirit of infidelity, like the malefactor who railed against him on the cross; or lifted up the heel against him, like the traitor who betrayed him into the hands of his enemies; or abandoned themselves to the spirit of persecution, like Herod, who set him at naught and mocked him; or perverted the right ways of the Lord, like Elymas the sorcerer, who was full of all subtlety and mischief; or departed from him sorrowful, like the young man who had great possessions; or deemed themselves independent of the riches of his grace, like the proud Pharisee, who trusted in himself that he was righteous, and despised others; or satisfied themselves with the form, without the power of godliness, like the foolish virgins, who went out to meet the bridegroom, but had no oil in their lamps; or sought to escape from their conviction, like Felix, who deferred the overtures of the gospel to a more convenient season; or manifested the indecision of Agrippa, who, though almost, was not altogether persuaded to be a Christian; or lightly esteemed the blessings of the great salvation, like Gallio, who cared for none of these things.

But with regard to ALL WHO HAVE COME TO THE SAVIOUR in the sincerity of their hearts, sensible of their burdens, their helplessness, and their misery, how different has been their experience, and how encouraging. Just look at a few of the cases recorded in the sacred volume, and mark how cordial was the reception they met with, yet how varied the attitudes in which they appear.

One is standing afar off, with a cloud on his countenance, and a burden of guilt on his heart, not venturing to lift so much as his eye unto heaven: thus did the Publican when he smote upon his breast, and gave utter-

ance to the humble but accepted prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Another appears to be rising up, as if coming to his right mind, disgusted with the abominations after which he had been walking, and so touched with the tender mercies he had hitherto despised, as to be saying in his heart, "I will arise and go to my Father:" thus did the prodigal; and his father saw him, even while he was yet a great way off, and had compassion, and ran, and fell upon his neck and kissed him.

Another is in the act of coming to the Saviour, but coming *secretly*, satisfied in his own heart that he is a teacher come from God, who teaches savingly and to profit, yet afraid of the reproaches of men, and scarce fortified as yet for the bold and open avowal of his name: thus did Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, when he came to him by night.

Another is coming to him openly, and with great ardor and impetuosity of spirit, heedless of every difficulty, and in the very face of peril and of death; thus did Peter, when he walked alone on the bosom of the dark and tempestuous sea.

Another is following after him, but with a less bold and intrepid spirit, timid, silent, trembling, shrinking from the presence of his awful majesty: thus did the woman who came behind him in the press, and touched but the hem of his garment.

Another is running before him, almost afraid he may lose the sight of him, yet putting himself in the way by which he was to pass, and diligently seeking him while he was to be found; thus did Zaccheus, when the Saviour looked up and saw him in the sycamore-tree, and said to him, "Make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

Another is sitting at the very feet of Christ, entertaining the recollection of past guilt, and weeping as one weepeth for an only child: thus did the penitent in the house of Simon the Pharisee, when she washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head.

Another is lying prostrate on the ground, overwhelmed with the force of irresistible convictions, and crying out

in the agony of his spirit, "What must I do to be saved?" Thus did the jailer at Philippi, when the glad message fell like music on his heart, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Another is seeking for the Saviour, the same Saviour whom she had formerly found, and whose footsteps she had been following, but whose presence had again departed, seeking him with sorrowfulness of heart, seeking him early and with intense desire, seeking him in the dark, and at the grave where her sins had laid him: thus did the Mary Magdalene out of whom seven devils had been cast.

Others again, are attending eagerly on instituted ordinances, or searching the Scriptures with all diligence, such as Lydia of Thyatira, whose heart the Lord opened when frequenting the place where prayer was wont to be made; or Mary of Bethany, who sat at the feet of Jesus listening to the words of everlasting life; or Timothy, who from a child had known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation: or the Eunuch of Ethiopia, to whom Philip preached Jesus on his return from Jerusalem, where he had gone to worship; or Apollos of Alexandria, who was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, and instructed in the way of the Lord.

And others still, are occupied with the solemn exercises of *prayer:* the blind man crying in his darkness, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me;" the leper in his uncleanliness, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" the woman of Canaan in the extremity of her distress, "Lord, help me;" the persecuting Saul amid the terror of his convictions, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the woman of Samaria at the well of Sychar, "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw;" the malefactor in his last agonies, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" and the martyred Stephen, with the view of heaven's glories opening up before him, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

It is especially deserving of notice, that in the experience of each of these individuals, there was something

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peculiar or characteristic. Not one of them was possessed of the same attainments, or placed in the same position, or precisely in the same state of mind as another. There was dejection in one, and penitence in another; timidity in one, and anxiety in another; intrepidity in one, and trembling in another; expectation in one, and weeping in another, and apprehension in another, and serenity in another, and ful assurance in another. Nevertheless they were all coming, or had already come to the Saviour. Therefore, *none of them was cast out.* They were all treated as children of the same family—as believers; and whether they were standing afar off, or coming by night, or sitting at his feet, or weeping at his grave, or reclining on his bosom, or looking to his cross, or interceding at his throne—the throne where light is given to the blind, and purity to the unclean, and help to the afflicted, and direction to the doubtful, and relief to the destitute, and the bright entrance into heaven to the dying—still, the Saviour had a kindly look, or a helping hand, or a word of comfort for them all: and how diversified soever were their cases, the experience of every one of them was accordant with the declaration of the great Redeemer, "*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*"

And what is the practical lesson taught by these cases, and which every man should be anxious to learn for himself? It is this: that *there is an all-sufficiency* in the riches of the Saviour's grace, that is equal to the necessities of your own case, however urgent these necessities may be; if you come to the Saviour as you are, with all your burdens and with all your miseries, you will assuredly meet a kind and gracious reception, and be enabled to set your seal to the truth of the gospel declaration, that it is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief."

Re-printed by Strother & Marcom. Book and Job Printers, Raleigh, N. C.

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